

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

79th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2017 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

Measure: SB 380 - A

***Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official***

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Measure Description:

Requires State Parks and Recreation Commission to allow disabled veterans to make reservations for use of state park areas one month prior to reservation system being made available to general public.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)

Summary of Expenditure Impact: See Analysis

Summary of Revenue Impact: See Analysis

Analysis:

SB 380-1 requires the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to identify and set aside 10% of the campsites available at each state park where campsite reservations are permitted, or four campsites, whichever is more, for reservations by disabled veterans for the first 30 days of any applicable reservation period.

Currently, OPRD provides free camping (tent, RV, and standard horse site) and free parking at day-use fee parks, to veterans with service-connected disabilities. Under this rule, camping is limited to 10 nights at a single park, or a total of 10 nights in a 30 day period. For fiscal year 2015-16, OPRD offered an equivalent of 28,926 nights of free camping, valued at \$726,834.

For this analysis, it is assumed that the bill does not allow OPRD to distinguish between tent, RV, or standard horse site, and high-priced sites such as deluxe yurts and cabins. Additionally, it is anticipated that SB 380-1 may significantly expand the population that is eligible under the rule, as the bill does not distinguish between disabled veterans whose disability is service-connected; and those veterans who became disable after their service was completed. The expansion of the population eligible under this rule may pose a significant decrease in operating revenue to OPRD.

OPRD has indicated that during its peak season (May through September) it is common for at least one eligible campsite type to be at 100% occupancy, and most parks to experience multiple campsite types at 100% occupancy. Of the disabled veteran waivers used between May 2015 and April 2016, approximately 70% were used during peak season. OPRD indicates that this may lead to disabled veteran waiver visitors "crowding out" full paying visitors during peak periods. The extent to which this may occur is known, but may pose a significant impact to the operating revenue of OPRD.

Additionally, OPRD indicates that in order to implement the bill, upgrades to its information technology systems would be necessary, as well as manual procedures. It is unclear at this time how the sequestered campsites will be managed. The total fiscal impact to OPRD is indeterminate.